ISSN 0712-7774

CEREBUS

•MELODRAMA•EXPENSIVE•

87 JUN

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

2.00 CANADA 1.70 IN U.S.

N O T E • F R O M • T H E P R E S I D E N T

I sit here in my living room, all of Kitchener spread before me and I contemplate the evolution of the day. It began with a shadow looming through the doorway of the office which proved to be stacks and stacks of boxes, flat, five thousand in all. I have lost track of such things. Deni stopped sending the books out herself around the time the circulation hit 7500 (issues 11 through about 23) and the mailbags took up a good chunk of the entryway at that time. I remember two thousand Cerebus No. 1's in the living room on Weber Street, I remember seeing the guts for five thousand copies of Oktoberfest No. 1 on a skid at Moire Press.

I pictured each one of those boxes wrapped around a book an inch thick, and how much space **that** would take up. Karen was gone for lunch, but there was a note on her desk.

"D - Holy Shit! This better work - K"

She arrived a few moments later and apologized for the pessimistic tone of the message but it expresses my sentiments exactly. Arrived at the studio a while later and picked and prodded at the language of the Aardvark One International declaration of intent. Looked at the pages on the wall without touching a one (including the strangely blank panel on page nine), phoned Carol Cooper at A & M Records in New York to tell her Ger and I would be delighted to do a few album covers and made arrangements to get together before the U.K. Tour.

Then I made a mental note to announce in this space that Gerhard and I are going to winter in New Zealand this year and would be interested in hearing from any Commonwealth friends in Auckland and environs who could direct us to a comfortable two bedroom apartment near the beach that wouldn't mind being rented for three months, as well as any shops we could cover on a short tour (so we can have a New Zealand '87 Tour poster, **that's** why), and also to announce that the Personal Appearances below are the last ones until next summer (except for a few hypothetical New Zealand shops), to announce I don't do interviews any more having spent a whole day co-operating on a documentary I didn't get a copy of and two hours talking to a reporter for a story that never saw print.

I made a further mental note to start work on my essay "Jumping Into Bed with DC" or "How I Almost Lost my Corporate Cherry on Fifth Avenue", start on this issue's letters page and finish 18, 19, 20 and the cover.

And that damn panel on page nine.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE - Frank Miller read the first half of this issue in Dallas and pronounced it "brutal". Fair warning, kids. Frank knows from brutal (hi, Frank).

July 17, 1986 4:00 A.M.

PERSONAL APPEARANCES

U.K. TOUR 86
September 19 - October 4

OCTOBER 25
DAVE SIM
COMIC RELIEF
357 Main Street,
Greenfield, MA.

NOVEMBER 8 & 9
DAVE SIM & GERHARD
Mid-Ohio-Con
Fairhaven Hall
Richland County Fair Grounds,
Mansfield, OHIO

NOVEMBER 22
DAVE SIM & GERHARD
The Philadelphia Marketplace
The Philadelphia Centre Hotel
J.F.K. Boulevard,
Philadelphia, PA.,

NOVEMBER 23
DAVE SIM & GERHARD
The New York Market Place,
Roosevelt Hotel
Madison Avenue/46th Street,
New York City, NY.,

CEREBUS

No. 87 June 1986

DAVE SIM
President

KAREN McKIEL
Administrator

GERHARD
Backgrounds, cover-colour, and tones,

Circulation
32,000

Distributors
Andromeda Publications
367 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario

Bud Plant Inc.
P.O. Box 1886
Grass Valley, CA 95945

Capital City Distributors
2827 Perry Street,
Madison, WI., 53713

Comex Distributors
10561-111 Street,
Edmonton, Alberta
T5H 3E8

Diamond Distributors
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Baltimore, MD., 21207

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124 Vandalia Avenue
Collinsville, ILL., 62234

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Burlington, Ontario
L7L 4X5

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Kitchener, Ontario
N2G 1V9

Second Genesis
1112 N. E. 21st St.
Portland, OR., 97232

Styx Comic Service
1858 Arlington Street,
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2X 1W6

Titan Distributors
P.O. Box 250,
London, England
E3 4RT

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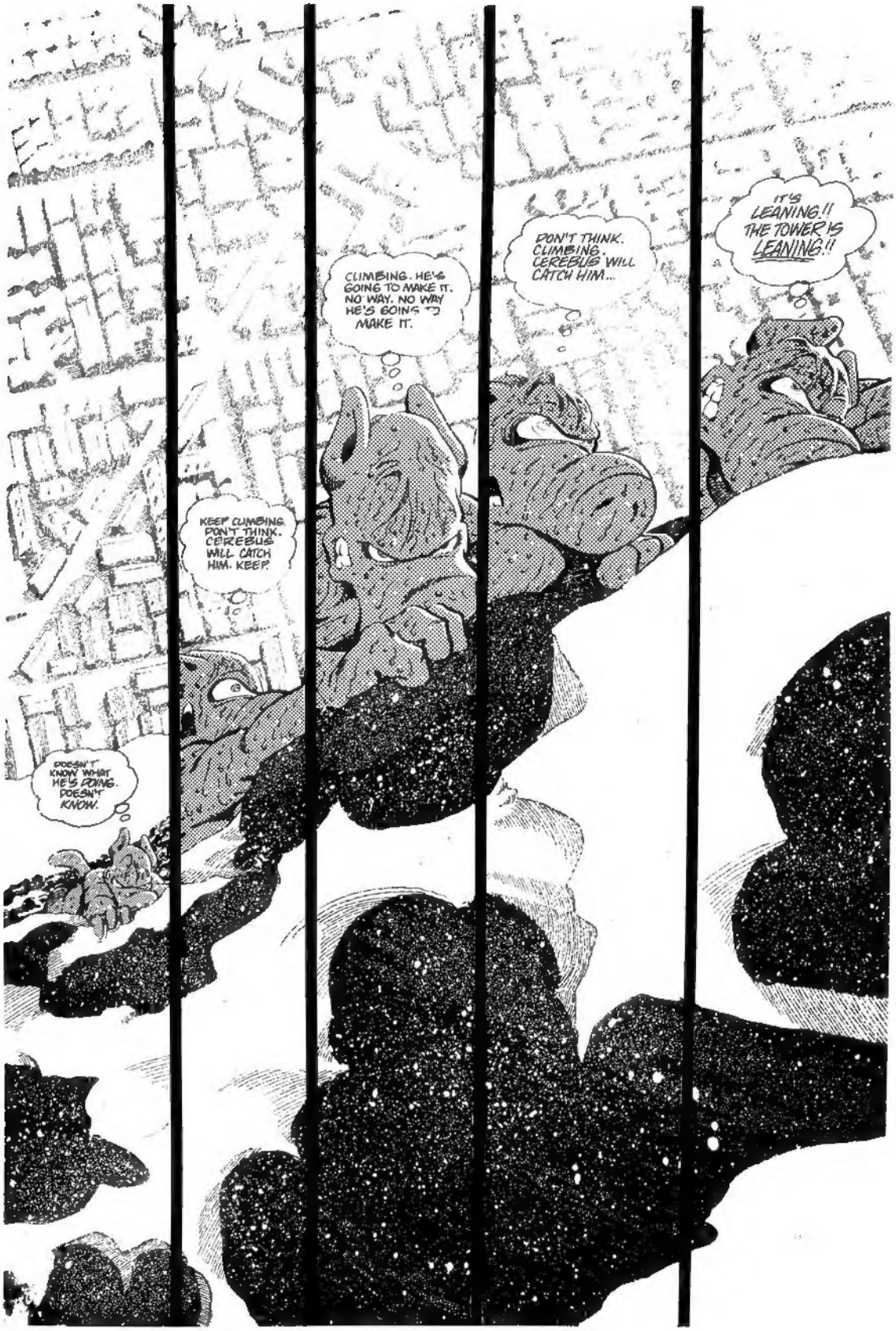
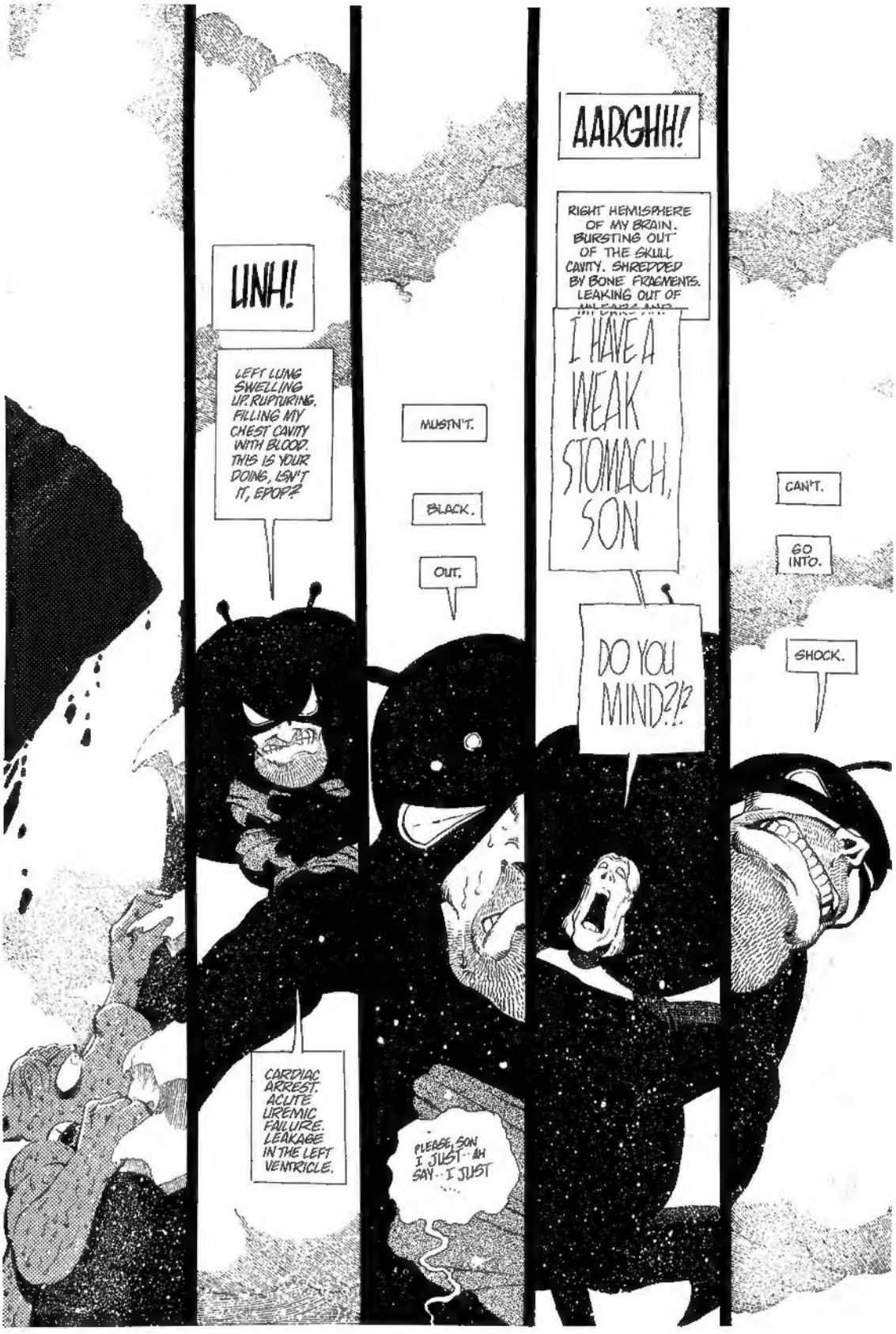

DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING. DOESN'T KNOW.
KEEP CLIMBING. DON'T THINK. CEREBUS WILL CATCH HIM. KEEP.
CLIMBING. HE'S GOING TO MAKE IT. NO WAY. NO WAY HE'S GOING TO MAKE IT.
DON'T THINK. CLIMBING. CEREBUS WILL CATCH HIM...
IT'S LEANING!! THE TOWER IS LEANING!!

TOWERS
...THE CLOSEST SECRET SACRED WARS CALL YET. CAN'T FORGET ABOUT THE GOLD THAT WEISSHAUPT TOLD ME HAS POWERS TO GRANT MY DEEPEST SECRET SACRED HEART'S DESIRE AND BRING EVERLASTING PEACE TO THE SCUM WHO LAUGHED AT MY TIGHTS ALL THESE SECRET SACRED YEARS...
JUST--AH SAY--JUST A COTTON-PICKIN' MINUTE, SON--Y'SCENARIO IS RIGHT BUT Y'VE MISCAST IT! WRONG LEADING MAN, THAT IS...
IT'S--AH SAY--IT'S THE DAWNING OF THE AGE OF THE ALBINO!!
EVERYONE DIES...
EVERYONE
analogous
I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL SORRY FOR BUNKY-ROACH. EVEN AS THE SECRET SACRED WARS TRANSFORM HIM INTO ONE OF THE CHOSEN ROACHES, HE DENIES HIS ONE TRUE SECRET SACRED WARS DESTINY...
RRIP
IT'S--AH SAY IT'S A COSTUME, SON...
IT'S ALL BLACK FELT AND EIDER DOWN, SON--STUFFING, THAT IS...

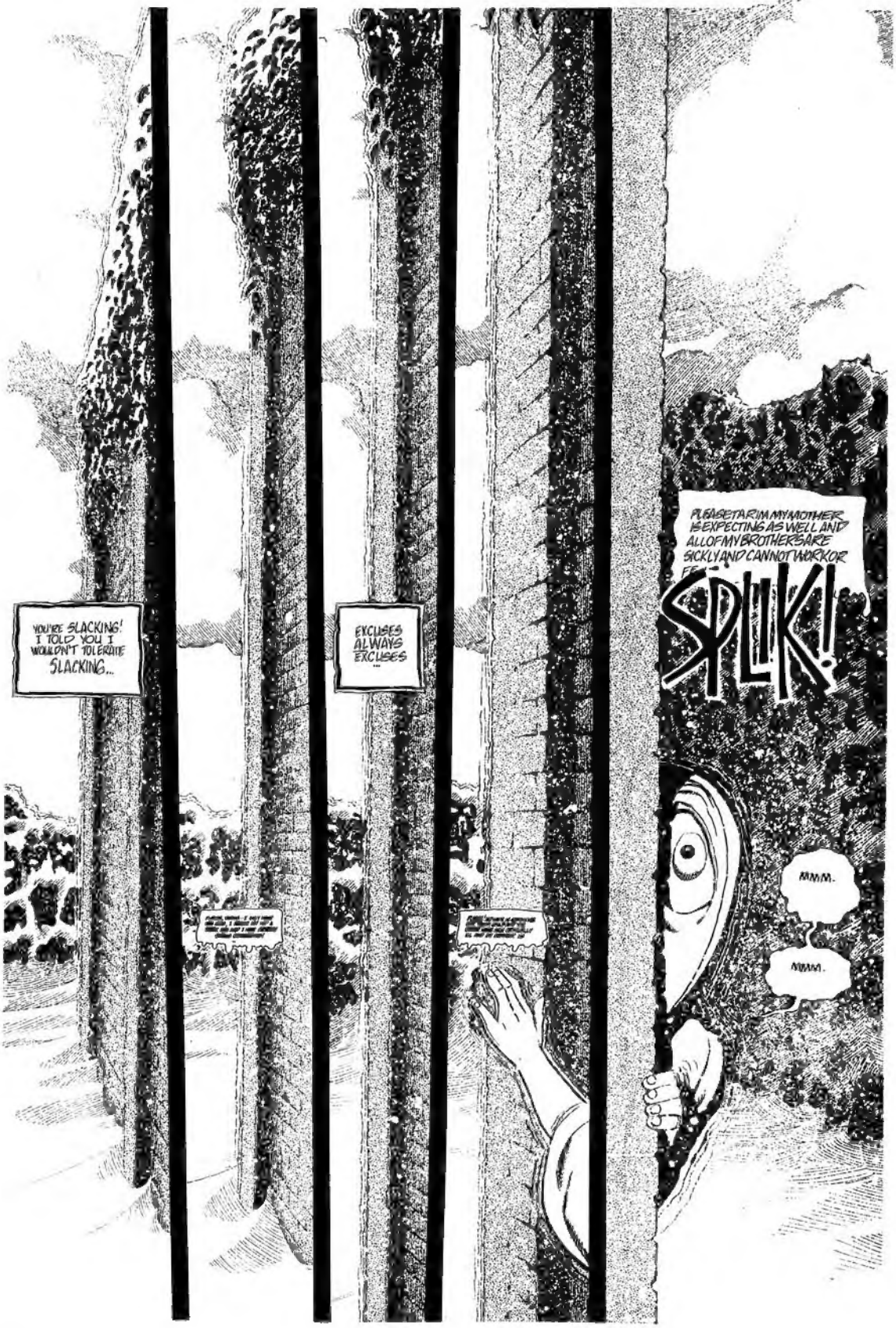
SO, EPOP-- YOU CONTINUE YOUR SECRET SACRED CORRUPTION OF MY FOLLOWERS COMPELLING THEM TO COMMIT SECRET SACRED VIOLENCE UPON THEMSELVES
...
ONCE AND FOR ALL, I VOW TO BREAK YOUR HOLD ON THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE NEW SECRET SACRED GENERATION OF ROACHES THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW TRUE FREEDOM AS MY UNQUESTIONING ADHERENTS...
YOU'RE BROKEN, EPOP
...
AND I'M GOING TO FIX YOU.
WITH MY FAITH AND HANDS
...

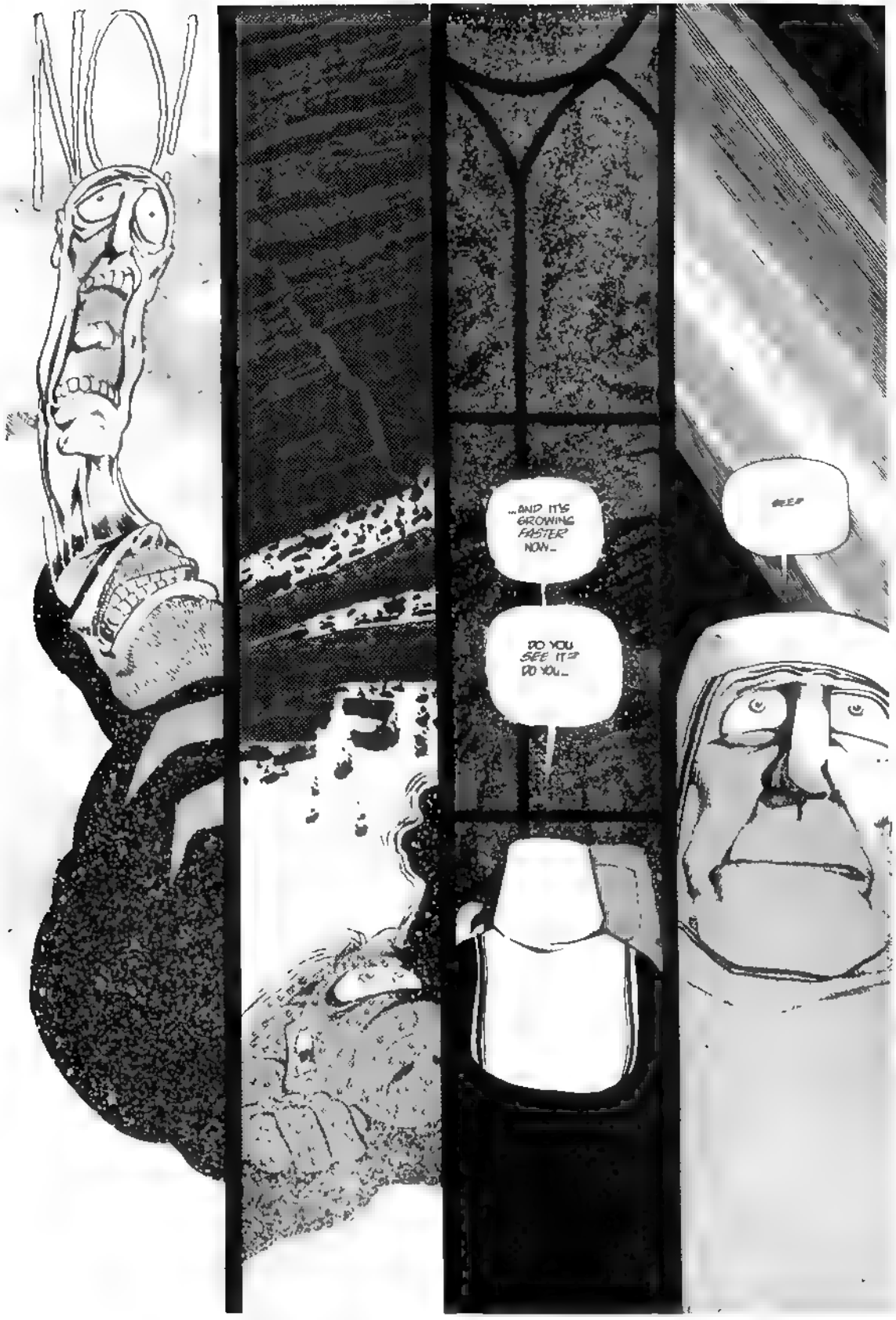

UNH!
LEFT LUNG SWELLING UP, RUPTURING, FILLING MY CHEST CAVITY WITH BLOOD. THIS IS YOUR DOING, ISN'T IT, EPOP?
AAH
CARDIAC ARREST. ACUTE UREMIC FAILURE. LEAKAGE IN THE LEFT VENTRICLE.
MUSTN'T.
BLACK.
OUT.
PLEASE, SON I JUST-- AH SAY-- I JUST
AARGHH!
RIGHT HEMISPHERE OF MY BRAIN. BURSTING OUT OF THE SKULL CAVITY. SHREDDED BY BONE FRAGMENTS. LEAKING OUT OF
I HAVE A WEAK STOMACH, SON
DO YOU MIND?!?
CAN'T.
GO INTO.
SHOCK.

BREATHE. PEEP. FLEX.
COUNT TO TEN.
HUNCH OVER.
SQUINT.
CLOSE-UP.
WE'RE ALL COCKROACHES EPOP...
WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN COCKROACHES
WE HAVE TO BE COCKROACHES
WE LOVE BEING COCKROACHES
EVEN JASON LOVED BEING A COCKROACH...
CLIMBING KEEP CLIMBING ...
YOU'VE LOST ME, SON ...
WHO-- I SAY WHO IS JASON?

DON'T.
EVER.
SAY.
THAT.
NAME.
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
UNDERSTAND?!
BAD
SOLDIER!

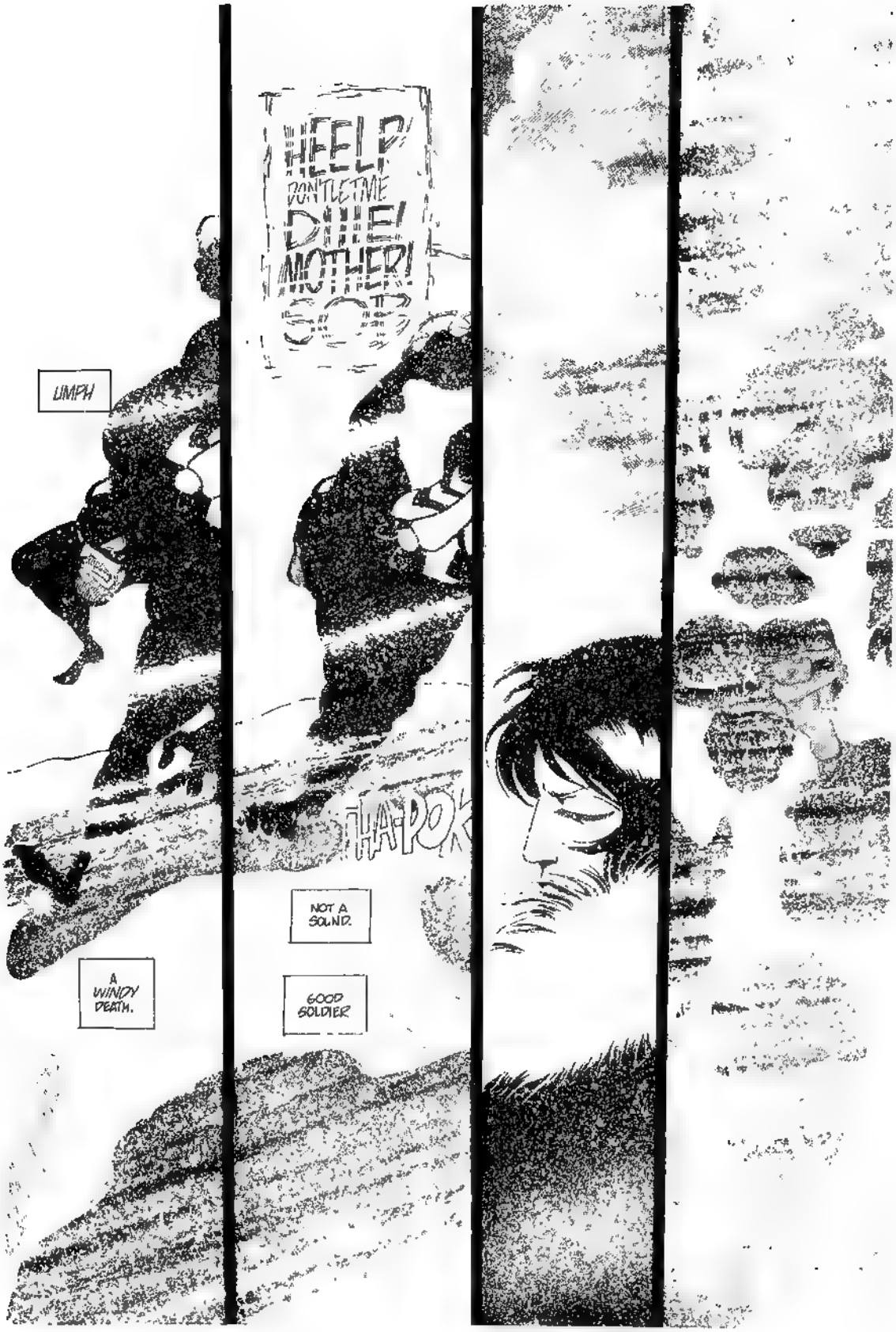
MY LIPS...
AH SAY...
MY LIPS'RE SEALED, SON...
BUT... THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WE CAN...
...DO.
PRAY.
PRAY THAT THE LION ARRIVES IN TIME TO SAVE US...
YOU!


YOU'RE SLACKING! I TOLD YOU I WOULDN'T TOLERATE SLACKING...
EXCUSES ALWAYS EXCUSES ...
PLEASE TARIM MY MOTHER IS EXPECTING AS WELL AND ALL OF MY BROTHERS ARE SICKLY AND CANNOT WORK OR FE...
SPLIK!
MMM.
MMM.


...AND IT'S GROWING FASTER NOW...
DO YOU SEE IT? DO YOU...

NT WORK
STER I'LL
SH AND K
QUISH

O-KAY!
WHO'S NEXT?
MMM
MMMM
THE POWER OF HIM

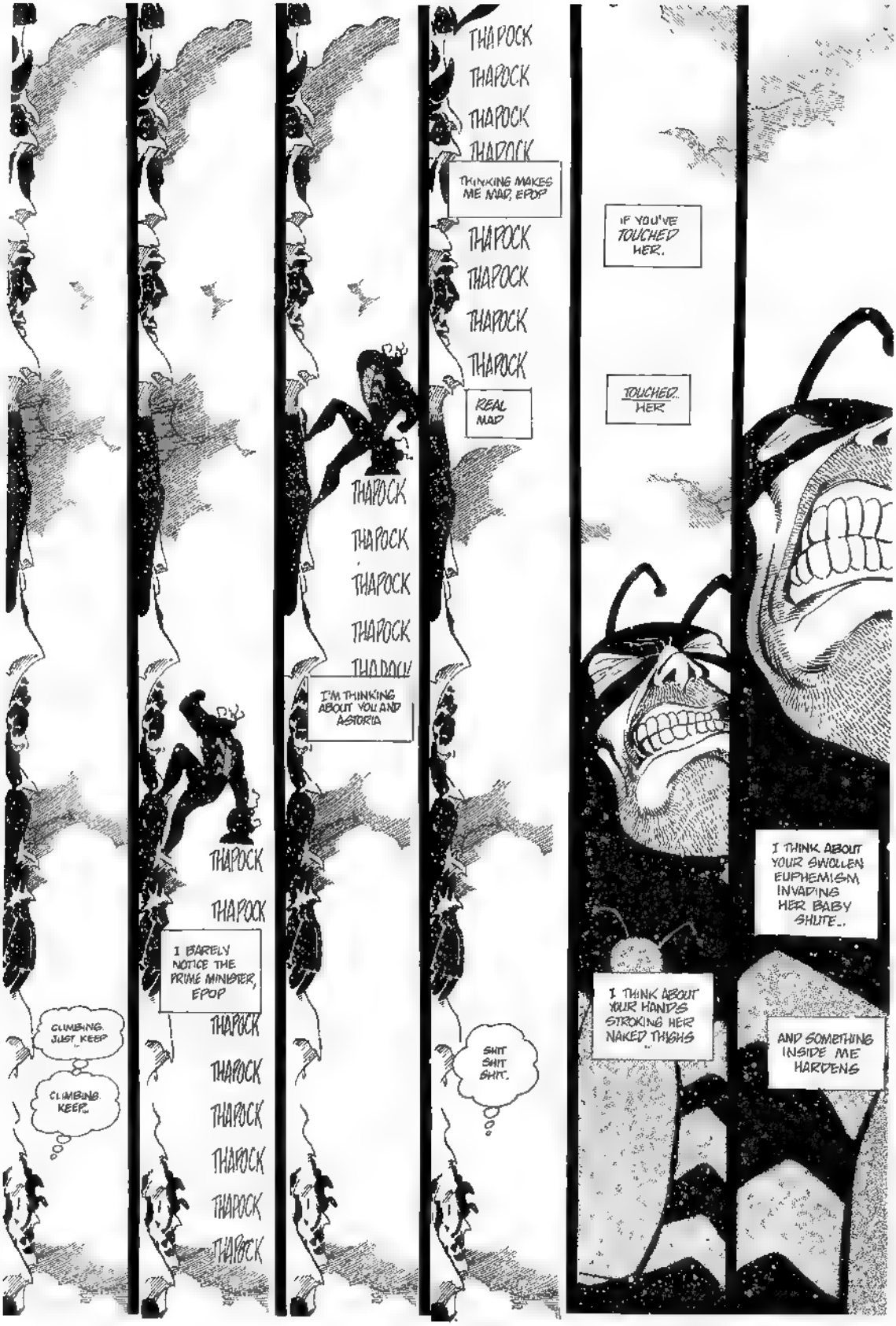

HEEL!
DON'T LET ME
DIE!
MOTHER!
UMPH
A WINDY DEATH.
NOT A SOUND.
GOOD SOLDIER

SNIVEL!
BOB!
MOTHER!
FALLING.
DOWN.
SHRIEK
THA POCK
MM BAD LUCK
REAL FAST
HAVE TO TIME THIS..
JUST RIGHT..
OR
POCK
CRAK
SNAP
RIP
POP
SNAP
WRENCH
CRIK

TORN LIGAMENTS
SEVERED TENDONS
SLIPPED DISCS
DISLOCATED SPINE
WHIPLASH
FRACTURED RIBS
INTERNAL BLEEDING
SHOULDER SEPARATED (ONE) (TWO)
MUSCLE T
BLACK
OUT

IGNORE PAIN.
THINK.
ASTORIA
IF YOU'VE HARVESTED HER ERROR

DIZZY
MUST BE THE RIBS
HAVE TO STRAIGHTEN MY.
CRIK
SPINE.
BREATHE DEEP
OKAY
HEADS UP, EPOP


CLIMBING. JUST KEEP
CLIMBING. KEEP.
I BARELY NOTICE THE PRIME MINISTER, EPOP
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
I'M THINKING ABOUT YOU AND ASTORIA
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THAPOCK
THINKING MAKES ME MAD, EPOP
REAL MAD
SHIT SHIT SHIT.
IF YOU'VE TOUCHED HER.
TOUCHED... HER
I THINK ABOUT YOUR HANDS STROKING HER NAKED THIGHS
I THINK ABOUT YOUR SWOLLEN EUPHEMISM INVADING HER BABY SHUTE...
AND SOMETHING INSIDE ME HARDENS

YOU MADE IT!!
ARTEMIS! YOU MADE IT!!
I'M GOING TO MAKE IT HURT EPOP
I'M GOING TO START WITH YOUR TOES
OH ARTEMIS! I COULD KISS YOU!
SOMETHING WILL TELL ME TO STOP AT THE TOP OF YOUR LEG
I WON'T LISTEN
WHAT ON EARTH IS HE CARRYING?
I'M GOING TO CHEW YOU UP, EPOP

ARTEMIS...
GIVE ME YOUR HAND
WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME..
THE TOWER..
AND LET THE REST OF YOU DRIBBLE DOWN MY CHIN..
..AND SPIT YOU OUT
OUT OF THE WAY, BITCH...
I HAVE A SCORE TO SETTLE.

NEXT: SETTLING SCORES

Comics Buyer's Guide
Fan Awards for 1985

Vote for your favorite in each category:

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2. Favorite Writer .....

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4. Favorite Cover Artist .....

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8. Favorite Book* .....

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Mail your ballot individually in a single envelope by June 30, 1986 to:

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Name ..... **Age** ..... **Male Female** *(circle one)*

Street or Box .....

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Please type or print your vote and information clearly.

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

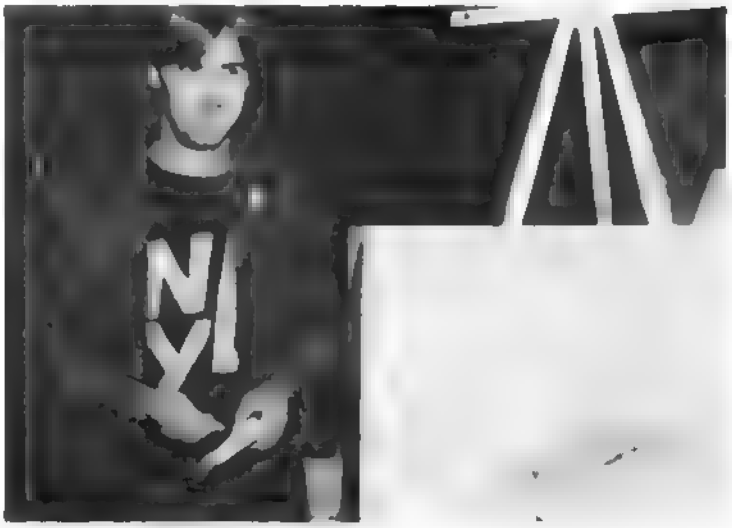


Photo by one of the half-dozen or so people who showed up to see me in Austin Texas in May. We all had a lovely time. Thanks Paul. Jacket by Shapes of Kitchener (Thanks Mike). Sweatshirt from the lobby gift shop at the Roosevelt Hotel, New York City. Bear lapel pin courtesy Jennifer Beck, Halifax, N.S. (Thanks, Jen).

NOTES

or "Hi, there!"
It's me, again.

Well, I'm sitting here in the studio, with the cover and letters page yet to do and I've just read a good hundred or so Aardvark Comment letters. The topic of conversation is almost exclusively "Dave's bad attitude" pro and con. The "pro" letters tend to be "let freedom ring" in tone and substance, responding to the fact that I, have by happy accident or cosmic twist of fate, cut myself a hunk of turf that grants me more creative freedom than, say, Leonardo da Vinci had. This was the only salient point to my recent tantrums and naturally enough I was gratified by the number of people who got that at which I was driving. The "con" letters are an uneven mixture of people feeling bad for the fans I "kicked in the teeth" (to borrow one of the pithier descriptions) people opining that I have become arrogant, unfeeling, rude, stuck-up, brutal (you get the idea) people predicting that Cerebus won't last another year.

The genesis of those letters columns was the oft-expressed fan sentiment that there is something wrong with printing letters of praise exclusively -- that Marvel does this and as a consequence their credibility suffers. Not wanting to let my credibility suffer -- or even experience twinges of discomfort -- I set about trying to strike a balance. That presented a different problem. Cerebus is mine. All mine. On a day-to-day basis I just shrug off the occasional "Dear dip-shit" letter and drop it in the garbage. The problem was finding something to say to these whimsical individuals. Do you see? It was the difference between picking up the phone and hearing a stream of invective that you can stop by replacing the receiver or having people shuffling around your apartment saying "A wonderful apartment. Just great. You should be very proud, but that chair sucks and these colours aren't right and the rug is ugly" or "So this is the great

apartment? Hah! It used to be great but there's nothing here. It used to be full of neat stuff but the new stuff is all CRAP".

Cerebus is mine. All mine. It bears repeating because some of you still don't get it.

Here's where I think I went wrong.

My intention with the letters page for the longest time was to do the letters to the Editor section in National Lampoon, but to use authentic letters. The more wack-o letters I printed the more I got and the stranger the letters page got. If it made me laugh, it had a good shot at making the next issue's Aardvark Comment. Then I started getting the occasional complaint from the self-declared letter-hacks (I won't go into what I infer from their title) that there were no wordy discourses on Cerebus anymore. Okey-doke. Let's try that, I thought. The problem was essentially one of tone. By virtue of paying $1.70 for a copy of my work, many people became self-appointed editors and art directors. As I started skimming other letters pages the names would recur, all with criticisms that had no foundation besides "I don't like it" or "I feel ripped off". And what I found particularly galling was that the no-talent bozos who answered the letters in these other books made no effort to defend the creative people involved and tried to be as civil, as polite, as placating as they could manage while, with reservations, humbly disagreeing.

Fuck that.

And then it came together. Bozos who can't write or draw writing to other bozos who can't write or draw and complaining about the quality of work produced by someone who can write and/or draw.

I don't like George Thorogood doing country and western music. To me he is one of the finest rock and rollers, but country and western leaves me cold.

But!

Does it make any sense for me to write a letter to Mr. Thorogood (let's suppose for the sake of argument that it goes straight to him as the Aardvark Comment letters go straight to me) telling him that he's making a mistake by including country and western songs on his albums, that they would sell much better if they were strictly rock and roll albums?

I mean, I daresay the thought has occured to him and has probably come up in conversation and meetings with the record company executive bozos that are his crosses to bear. What could be his only response (supposing, once again, for the sake of argument that he would respond to such inane advocacy)?

It's my music and I do it my way. Don't like it? Don't buy it. There's lots of rock and roll albums that don't have country and western on them. Buy those instead.

If I then belaboured the point by indicating that I paid good money for his last album and out of the ten songs on it I only really thought two were vintage Thorogood and the rest were filler or hackwork or muzak fodder, I should not be surprised to see him roll his eyes heavenward, grimace, jerk a thumb in my direction and ask of no one in particular "Who is this asshole?"

He would be right and I would be wrong. Period.

Now let me add tangentially that if the purpose of your criticism is to effect change it's not very likely to happen for the next two and half or three years. Not in Church and State, anyway. It exists now in full skeletal form and probably wraps up around issue 115 which will make it almost twice the length of High Society at completion (we will release it as a two volume set sometime after it's done).

Just as I started getting intimations of Church and State as High Society reached the half-way point (#37-38), so am I now getting initial thoughts about the Cirinist/Kevillist/Love Story novel which will follow Church and State.

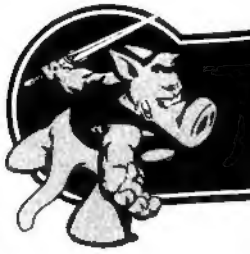
Having spent the better part of nine years planning everything that is (and much of what will be) in Cerebus I am quite a bit further ahead then all of you. This is as it should be, in my mind, or there would be damn few surprises.

With these caveats, I welcome your criticism and comments but I also serve notice that the funny letters will get priority on the letters page, followed by interesting, followed by critical.

And from time to time I might just take custody of this space to have a bit of a go at any topic that I feel like blathering on about.

Because it's mine.

All mine.



AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, INC.

Hi Guys,

Well the reaction to High Society, while not overwhelming has been more than sufficient. The printed copies are being shipped to all who ordered one as fast as Karen can get them wrapped.

Once again, the first edition, consisting of six thousand copies will be sold on a first-come first-serve basis by VISA phone order, certified cheque or money order only. Single copies are $20.00 US and $25.00 CDN plus $2.00 for postage, or 1 box of 18 books for $300.00 US and $400.00 CDN (boxes will be shipped UPS). Please call (519) 576-7820.

As of this writing we have five thousand or so left and the nine hundred sold so far has paid all of the printing and binding costs, so we probably won't need to reprint for a year or so.

Oh and anyone who talked to "Steve" one Friday, that was me doing my Barry Windsor-Smith impression. Karen was on holiday.

Assuring the survival and the success of creative liberty, I remain,

Thanks,

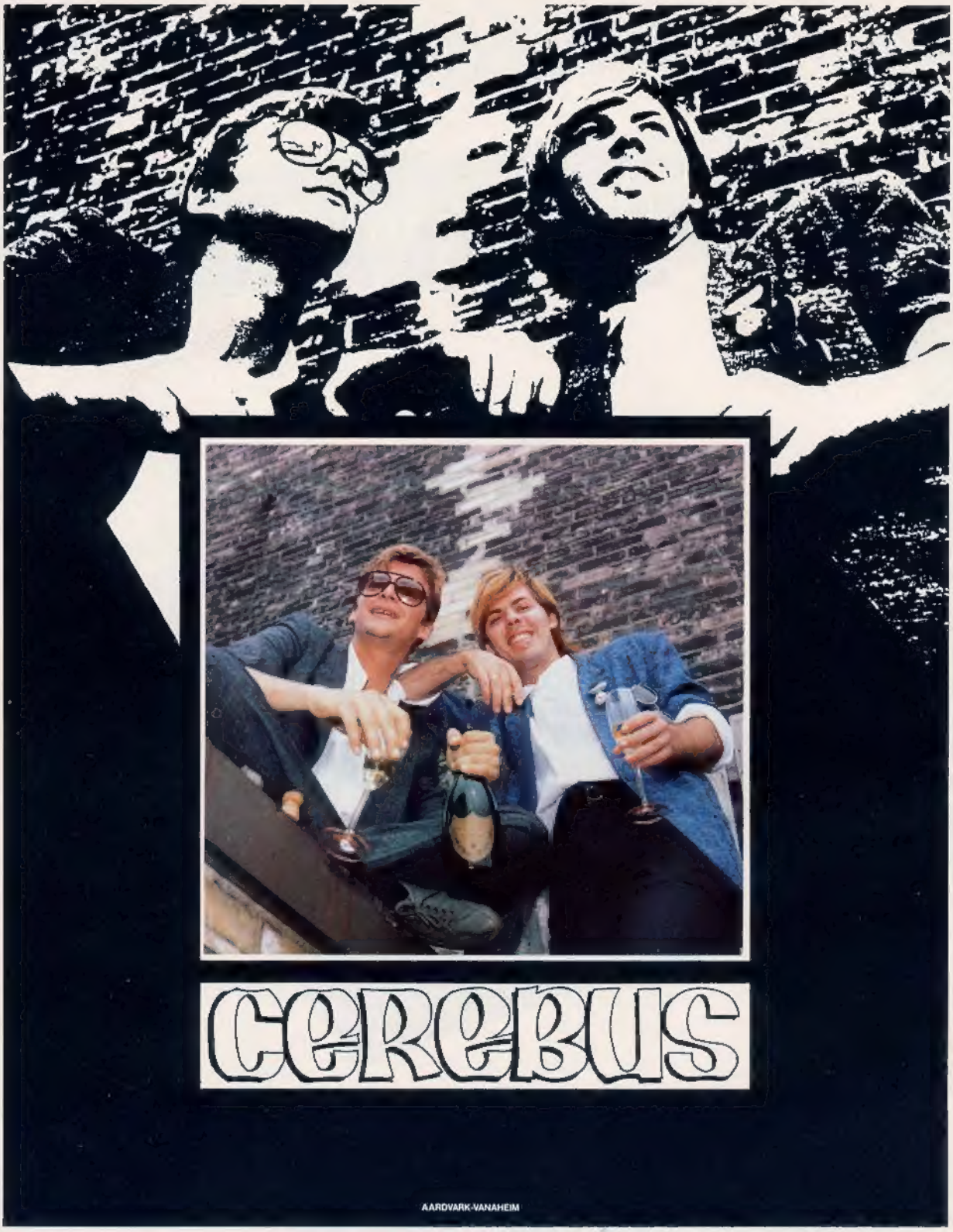
Dave

Dave Sim, President
Aardvark-Vanaheim, Inc.,

BOX 1674 STATION 'C' KITCHENER ONTARIO N2G 4R2

IT'S HERE

NOW.



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